

REMARKS

Claims 3, 10, and 18 are pending in the present application. Claim 9 has been canceled by this Amendment without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with thanks that the Examiner has allowed claims 3, 10, and 18.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,955,850 to Yamaguchi et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,012,362 to Kawate et al.

This rejection has been rendered moot by the cancellation of claim 9 above. The cancellation of claim 9 does not constitute an admission as to the validity of this rejection. Instead, claim 9 was canceled in an effort to expedite the allowance of the present application.

Conclusion

Entry of this Amendment After Final is respectfully requested in that it raises no new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that any outstanding matters remain in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Jason W. Rhodes (Reg. No. 47,305) at the telephone number of the undersigned to discuss the present application in an effort to expedite prosecution.

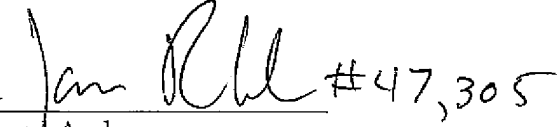
Application No. 10/811,980
Amendment dated December 18, 2007
After Final Office Action of October 18, 2007

Docket No.: 2257-0246PUS1

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: December 18, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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